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28 May 1996

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Agenda items 55 and 112
QUESTION OF CYPRUS
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 23 May 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 23 May 1996, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 55 and 112, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 23 May 1996 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ addressed to the Secretary-General

It appears that the Greek Cypriot Mission, in a letter addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations (A/50/958-S/1996/352 dated 15 May 1996), repeated the allegations regarding the "sale" of a Byzantine church in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, already published by them as a press release on 13 May 1996. In this connection, I have the honour to draw your attention to the fact that the Greek Cypriot side is blatantly distorting the advertisement published on this subject in the Turkish Cypriot newspaper Cyprus Today on 6 April 1996. I wish to point out that the advertisement refers to a leasehold, not a "sale" as the Greek Cypriot side claims.

The leasing of the Church of Panagia Chrysotrimithiotissa in the village of Edremit in northern Cyprus is part of the efforts of the Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to protect and preserve the artistic and architectural heritage of the land regardless of its cultural origin. This is fully in line with the Charter of Venice drawn up in 1964 and the Amsterdam Declaration issued by the Congress on the European Architectural Heritage in October 1975. The Declaration states, inter alia, that local authorities should afford functions to buildings which, whilst respecting their character, correspond to the needs of contemporary life and thus ensure their survival.

Furthermore, a report specifically prepared on the cultural heritage in both parts of Cyprus in July 1989 by the Committee on Culture and Education of the Council of Europe stated, in its paragraph 5.3 on protection of abandoned property, that it had been general Council of Europe policy for some time to urge reuse of redundant religious buildings. That was reasserted as recently as last May in the Assembly when it adopted resolution 916.

The practice of putting historic buildings to contemporary use, either through leasing or in other ways, is not uncommon on the Greek Cypriot side. A case in point is the Monastery of Archangel Michael, located in the village of Monagri in south Cyprus. The building which was little more than a ruin in 1987, was restored with foreign help and expertise and was turned into an art gallery and an art hostel, in which artists could live and work.

The Chrysotrimithiotissa church in northern Cyprus was restored by the leaseholder in 1992, fully respecting its original character, with the approval and under the strict observation of the Department of Antiquities and Museums of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the "Evkaf" (Religious Endowment) in whose possession the property is.

The building is currently being used as an arts and crafts gallery, for exhibitions by local artists and as a place where Shakespeare's plays are read and discussed. It should be stressed that the use of the church and its premises, either by the current or any future leaseholder, is subject to the express written approval of the Evkaf Endowment.

As for the Greek Cypriot claim of ownership of the property, such claims do not take into account the historical background of the Cyprus conflict or the current legal and political realities prevailing in the island. Nor do they take into account the agreed principles of the bi-zonality and bi-communality of a future federal settlement. Since, however, this is among the topics of discussion at the intercommunal talks as part of a comprehensive settlement, I will not enter into polemics with the Greek Cypriot side on this issue. Suffice it to say that the Greek Cypriot propaganda we are witnessing on this subject is clearly a product of the distorted mentality that Cyprus as a whole, both the south and the north, is exclusively Greek!

It was in this chauvinistic mentality that the Greek Cypriots destroyed 109 mosques, shrines and other places of Muslim worship across the island during the ethnic and cultural "cleansing" campaign of the Greek Cypriot side between 1963-1974. Among the casualties of this campaign of destruction was the historic Cami-i Cedit Mosque in the town of Paphos, which was completely razed to the ground and turned into a car park, as also indicated in the aforementioned Council of Europe report.

It is unfortunate that, in spite of its above record and at a time when it should come to the table for the achievement of a just and viable settlement through negotiations, the Greek Cypriot side is immersed in a counterproductive campaign of propaganda, undermining even further the chances for a negotiated settlement. Its well-known allegations on the demographic structure of Cyprus, again repeated in the Greek Cypriot representative's letter, must be viewed in the context of this campaign of deceitful propaganda and mispresentation. Since these allegations have been amply refuted in my successive previous communications, I need not deal with them again in detail. I would merely like to reiterate that it has always been the Greek Cypriot side which attempted to change the bi-communal character of the island by eradicating its Turkish Cypriot element in the previously mentioned campaign of ethnic and cultural cleansing, since 1963.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 55 and 112, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

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Agenda item 55
QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 24 May 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 23 May 1996, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 23 May 1996 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ
addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 29 April 1996 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations, which contains allegations regarding "violations of the airspace of the Republic" (A/50/949-S/1996/331 dated 2 May 1996).

I would like to recall that previous similar allegations were rejected in toto in my successive communications addressed to you, most recently in my letter dated 6 May 1996 (A/50/955-S/1996/348, annex, of 13 May 1996). Since the present Greek Cypriot charges are no more credible or valid than those previously made, I merely wish to reiterate that flights within the airspace of northern Cyprus are with the full knowledge and consent of the appropriate authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which the Greek Cypriot usurpers of the seat of government have no jurisdiction or right of say.

The reason behind the Greek Cypriot side's endless barrage of allegations regarding this or similar other subjects is clearly to cover up its intensive militarization campaign in the south, as part of the so-called "joint defence doctrine" with Greece. It is noteworthy that, in the context of the said scheme, the Greek Cypriot administration and Greece have recently carried out joint military exercises code-named "Toxotis" (Bow), held in and around south Cyprus. A-7 and F-16 warplanes and frigates from the Greek air and naval forces, in addition to the Greek Cypriot National Guard, took part in these exercises.

The following statement made by Lt. Colonel Venetis of the Greek Air Force, who participated in these exercises, encapsulates the provocative and aggressive posture of the joint Greek-Greek Cypriot front. The statement appeared in the Greek Cypriot press on 12 May 1996:

> "For us each and every corner of Cyprus is like the corner of our Aegean, our Thrace. The Greek Air Force personnel consider the airspace of Cyprus as an extension of the Greek airspace. We are in a position to reach within the shortest period of time any spot and whichever target we want on the territory, sea and skies of the Great Island" (meaning Cyprus).

Furthermore, it was also reported in the Greek Cypriot press of 9 May 1996, on the eve of the said joint manoeuvres, that within the context of the so-called "joint defence doctrine", Greece had decided to grant the Greek Cypriot administration 50 more tanks. Subsequently, the Greek Cypriot daily newspaper Simerini of 16 May 1996 reported that, together with the acquisition of 50 AMX-30B2 and 50 I80Y tanks, new personnel would also be enlisted in the Greek Cypriot National Guard. According to the paper, at least 1,000 additional professional soldiers were soon to join the Greek Cypriot National Guard for a duration of five years.

This military build-up on the Greek Cypriot side, coupled with belligerent statements emanating from Greece and south Cyprus, leaves no room for doubt that the ultimate aim of the so-called "joint defence doctrine" is to seek a military solution to the Cyprus question.

In view of the foregoing, I trust that the international community will do everything it can to persuade the Greek Cypriot side not to continue on this dangerous path and to join the Turkish Cypriot side at the table in the search for a peaceful solution to the Cyprus question through dialogue and negotiation.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 28 May 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government and further to our earlier letters concerning repeated Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon and Israeli practices there, I have the honour to notify you of a series of Israeli attacks that took place during the first half of May 1996.

7 May 1996

The hills of Mlita and Jabal Safi and the environs of Mlikh in the Ayn al-Tuffah area came under Israeli artillery bombardment.

9 May 1996

Mlikh, Luwayzah and the Zahrani river area came under Israeli artillery bombardment, and Israeli warplanes made low-altitude overflights in the Nabatiyah area.

12 May 1996

At 0900 hours the environs of Arabsalim, Jarju', Luwayzah and Mlikh came under Israeli artillery bombardment, and Israeli warplanes made low-altitude overflights in the Nabatiyah area.

At 1110 hours Israeli warplanes carried out four successive attacks on the environs of Ayn Bu Siwar and the Mlita hills and fired a number of rockets.

At 1800 hours, the following were apprehended by elements manning an improvised checkpoint set up by the Israeli forces on the Arnun-Yuhmur road: Muhammad Khalil Fiqh from Kafr Tibnit; Husayn Kamal Hayik from Kafr Tibnit; Qasim Muhammad Nasir Aliq from Yuhmur al-Shaqif.

14 May 1996

At 0845 hours the environs of Jabba' and Ayn Bu Siwar and the hills of Mlita and Jabal Safi came under Israeli artillery bombardment.

At 1230 the environs of Arabsalim, Jarju' and Luwayzah came under Israeli artillery bombardment, and Israeli warplanes made low-altitude overflights in the Nabatiyah area.

The Lebanese Government strongly condemns these repeated Israeli attacks, which have caused enormous damage to property. It further condemns in the strongest terms the arbitrary practices against civilians. Like previous attacks, this new series constitutes a blatant breach of the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon and a violation of international law and fundamental human rights.

I request you to have this letter circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Samir MOUBARAK
Ambassador
Permanent Representative